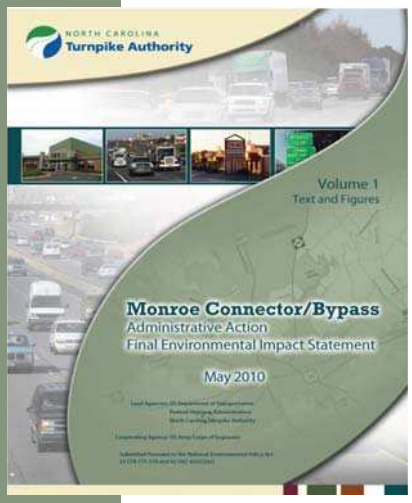
NORTH CAROLINA
Turnpike Authority

Monroe Connector/Bypass
Final EIS Fact Sheet

May 2010

Final EIS Now Available

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Monroe Connector/Bypass has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration. The document includes selection of the Preferred Alternative for the highway and responds to comments received on the Draft EIS (see Appendix B of the Final EIS for comments and responses). The Final EIS is available for public comment through June 25 on the project web site at **www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe** and at the following locations:



◊ NCTA Office
5400 Glenwood Ave.
Suite 400
Raleigh, NC 27612
(919) 571-3000

◊ NCDOT Div. 10 Office
716 W. Main St.
Albemarle, NC 28001
(704) 982-0101

◊ Monroe Planning Dept.
300 West Crowell St.
Monroe, NC 28112
(704) 282-4527

◊ Indian Trail Planning Dept.
130 Blythe Dr.
Indian Trail, NC 28079
(704) 821-5401

◊ Monroe Library
316 East Windsor St.
Monroe, NC 28112
(704) 283-8184

◊ Edwards Memorial Library
414 Hasty St.
Marshville, NC 28103
(704) 624-2828

◊ Stallings Planning Dept.
315 Stallings Rd.
Stallings, NC 28104
(704) 821-8557

◊ Matthews Branch Library
230 Matthews Station St.
Matthews, NC 28105
(704) 416-5000

◊ Union West Library
123 Unionville-Indian Trail Rd.
Indian Trail, NC 28079
(704) 821-7475

◊ MUMPO / Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Dept.
600 East Fourth St.
(8th Floor)
Charlotte, NC 28202
(704) 336-2205

Additional Studies

The following project documents were prepared in support of the Final EIS and are available on the project web site at **www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe**:

◊ Freshwater Mussel Survey Report (July 2009)

◊ Addendum to Traffic Noise Technical Memorandum (January 2010)

◊ Review for Potential On-Site Mitigation Technical Memorandum (February 2010)

◊ Final Addendum to Year 2035 Build Traffic Operations Technical Memorandum (February 2010)

◊ Archaeological Inventory and Evaluation for the U.S. 74 Monroe Connector (March 2010)

◊ Monroe Connector/Bypass Service Road Study (May 2010)

◊ Indirect and Cumulative Effects Quantitative Analysis (April 2010)

◊ Indirect and Cumulative Effects Water Quality Analysis (April 2010)

◊ Draft Biological Assessment of Carolina Heelsplitter (*Lasmigona decorata*) and Designated Critical Habitat, Schweintiz's Sunflower (*Helianthus schweinitzii*), Michaux's Sumac (*Rhus michauxii*), and Smooth Coneflower (*Echinacea laevigata*) (April 2010)

Preferred Alternative Development

Alternative D was identified as the project's Recommended Alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) approved by the Federal Highway Administration in March 2009. Based on public comments received on the Draft EIS and in coordination with environmental resource and regulatory agencies, Alternative D has now been confirmed as the project's Preferred Alternative. Alternative D was selected because it has lower overall impacts to the natural environment and residential areas than the other alternatives considered.

Final approval of the Preferred Alternative is expected this summer when the Federal Highway Administration issues a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD signals formal federal approval of the preferred alternative corridor and authorizes the Turnpike Authority to proceed with final design, right-of-way acquisition and construction as funds are available.

Right-of-Way Acquisition

Once construction plans are far enough along, the Turnpike Authority will begin the process of acquiring the property needed to construct the project. Individual land owners will be contacted by a right-of-way agent who will explain this acquisition process. Based on current schedules, it is anticipated that agents will begin contacting property owners in early 2011.

Brochures regarding the right-of-way acquisition process and relocation assistance can be found at **www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe/documents.asp**

Updates to the Preferred Alternative

During the public comment period following the publication of the Draft EIS, several concerns regarding the design of the Preferred Alternative and its impacts to the surrounding areas were raised by the members of the public, local municipalities and resource/regulatory agencies. In response, design modifications were made in the following areas: Forest Park subdivision, Beverly Drive, Bonterra Village, Unionville-Indian Trail Road interchange, and Austin Chaney Road interchange/McIntyre Road. These changes are discussed in Section 2.3 of the Final EIS.

The table below gives the estimated impacts of the Preferred Alternative along with alternatives presented in the Draft EIS. Impacts associated with the Preferred Alternative reflect the design changes made since the Draft EIS and the inclusion of service roads. A complete summary of the project impacts is included in the Final EIS.

	Range of all Alternatives in Draft EIS	Alternative D in Draft EIS	Preferred Alternative in Final EIS
Business Relocations	14 - 49	48	**47**
Residential Relocations	94 - 149	107	**95**
Farm Relocations	3	3	**3**
Stream Impacts (ft)	21,146 - 24,818	21,709	**23,083**
Wetland Impacts (ac)	6.2 - 11.0	8.1	**8.1**
Costs (millions $)[1]	$695.0 - $859.5	$716.3 - $850.0	**$749.1 - $824.3**

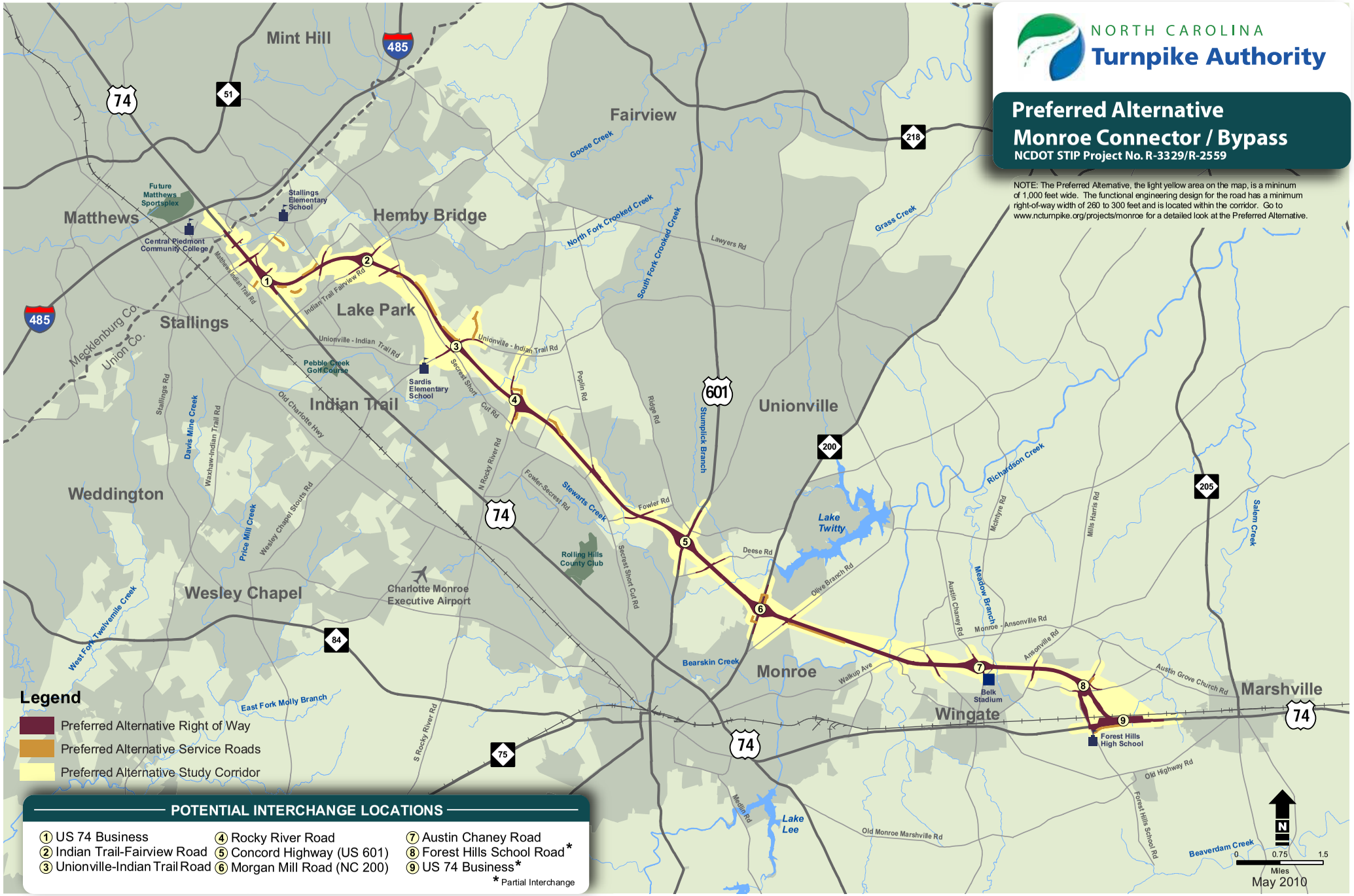
1- Costs of the Preferred Alternative reflect a higher level of confidence than previous estimates resulting in a narrower price range.

Funding

The Monroe Connector/Bypass is estimated to cost between approximately $750 and $825 million and will be financed using a variety of sources, including toll revenue bonds, federal loans, and state funding. Project financing is expected to be finalized in 2010.

Project Schedule

Record of Decision (ROD)	3rd quarter 2010
Finance Plan	4th quarter 2010
Award Contract to Design-Build Team	4th quarter 2010
Begin Construction Plan Development	1st quarter 2011
Begin Right-of-Way Acquisition	1st quarter 2011
Public Meetings	2nd quarter 2011
Project Open to Traffic	2014 / 2015



Project Maps

Detailed project maps can be found at **www.ncturnpike.org/procurement/Monroe.asp** under *Functional Designs.* These maps depict a suggested alignment within the Preferred Alternative corridor, developed as part of the environmental planning process. As the project moves forward into final design, the suggested alignment and designs may be modified but must remain within the Preferred Alternative corridor.

Toll Collection System

An electronic toll collection system will be installed on the Monroe Bypass/Connector so drivers will not have to stop at toll booths. Instead, a wireless transponder/receiver system will be used to collect tolls. Drivers will set up a prepaid account and mount a small transponder on the windshield of their vehicle. A receiver mounted over the roadway will automatically deduct the tolls as the vehicle travels under it at highway speed.

The Turnpike Authority will work with other toll authorities to ensure that transponders from other states can be used. Drivers who do not have a transponder will have a photo taken of their license plate and will be mailed a bill. In addition, the Turnpike Authority will operate a facility in the project area that accepts cash payments for tolls.

Aesthetic Design Guidelines

Community input plays an important role in decisions about the appearance of the bridges, noise walls and other structures along the Monroe Connector/Bypass. Through coordination with local stakeholders, Aesthetic Design Guidelines were developed to provide an attractive look for the new highway that reflects regional architecture. A sample of this theme is shown to the left.

The Need for the Project

Existing US 74 serves as an important commercial corridor for Union and Mecklenburg County residents and businesses, with many retail, commercial, and employment centers having direct access to/from US 74. The Monroe Connector/Bypass will improve mobility and capacity within the project study area by providing a facility for the US 74 corridor that allows for high-speed regional travel consistent with the designations of the North Carolina Strategic Highway Corridor program and the North Carolina Intrastate System, while maintaining access to properties along existing US 74.

Contact Information

monroe@ncturnpike.org
(919) 571-3000

Jennifer Harris, P.E.
Director of Planning and
Environmental Studies

North Carolina Turnpike Authority
1578 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1578